

Chapter 4

REFUGEE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE (RMA) PROGRAM

A. Program Purpose

Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) provides medical assistance to refugees who meet the Medicaid Program financial requirements, but do not meet the non-financial requirements. For example, an adult with no dependent children may receive RMA. The Medicaid Family and Children's Medically Needy Categorical rules apply for RMA.

B. RMA/Medicaid Comparison

1. The RMA Program mirrors the Medicaid Program in the types of medical services a person may receive through the program; payments from the Matching Grant Program is not counted as income; the right to appeal is generally the same; the spend-down rules are the same; the Virginia's Health Insurance Premium Program (HIPP) rules apply; and the case transfer process is the same.
2. The RMA Program does not mirror the Medicaid Program in that only income on the date of application is counted; there is a time limit on receipt of assistance; wages from employment after case approval are not counted; and there is no requirement for a social security number.

C. Special Application Rules

- a. If some persons on the Benefit Program Application are eligible for Medicaid and some are not, a new application is not required. The Benefits Program application serves as the application for Medicaid and RMA.

For example, if a Benefit Programs application includes a parent, two children under 19 who are in school, two children over 19, and an elderly relative, there would be four cases set up for that one application. There would be one Medicaid case for the parent and two children and three RMA cases, one for each of the children over 19 and one for the elderly adult.

- b. When one application covers multiple RMA cases, the signature of either the authorized refugee resettlement office case manager or the head of the refugee family household is sufficient. Multiple signatures are not required.

D. Eligibility Rules

1. The application for RMA is the VDSS Application for Benefits (032-03-824-25-eng (11/10)).

2. The applicant is screened for Medicaid eligibility following the Family and Children's Medically Needy guidance.
3. An applicant is eligible for RMA if he or she meets the Medicaid financial requirements, does not meet a categorical requirement, and has documentation showing he or she is in one of the refugee eligible groups defined in Chapter 1.
4. SAVE (System for Alien Verification for Entitlement) does not contain information about victims of trafficking. If there is a problem confirming the identity of an applicant who is a victim of human trafficking or if there appears to be a problem with the certification letter, do not deny the application. Call the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement trafficking verification line at (202) 401-5510 to confirm the validity of the certification letter or letter for children
5. Cash payments made to the refugee under the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Assistance Matching Grant Program are not counted as income.
6. The application must be made within the eight month time requirements defined below.
7. The applicant cannot be a full-time student in an institution of higher education.
8. There are some financial requirements that are unique to RMA.
 - a. Income on the date of application, not the average income over the application-processing period, is the criteria for eligibility for RMA.
 - b. Any assets that refugees may hold in their land of origin are not considered against the limits set by Medicaid.
 - c. Refugee populations are not 'sponsored' in the legal sense that sponsorship is used for other immigrant applicants. The income of a volunteer assisting a refugee or the resettlement office are not used in determining eligibility for the RMA program, nor are shelter or in-kind resources provided to the refugee by the sponsor.
 - d. Cash payments made to the refugee under the Department of State Reception and Placement program are not counted as income.
 - e. Wages from employment received after receipt of RMA and before the end of the eight-month eligibility period do not affect RAM eligibility.

- f. A Medicaid/FAMIS eligible refugee who becomes ineligible due to employment earnings during the RMA eligibility period is automatically eligible for RMA for the remainder of the eight-month eligibility period with no further screening for financial need.

9. Special Considerations

- a. There is no federal requirement that RMA recipients have a social security number or show proof of application for a social security number at the time of application.
- b. Wages from employment received after receipt of RMA and before the end of the eight month eligibility period do not affect RMA eligibility.
- c. A Medicaid/FAMIS eligible refugee who becomes ineligible due to employment earnings during the RMA eligibility period is automatically eligible for RMA for the remainder of the eight-month eligibility period with no further screening for financial need.

E. Time Limits

- 1. There is an eight month time limit on the receipt of RMA.
- 2. The date the eight month eligibility period begins depends on the status of the applicant.
 - i. For refugees, Cuban/Haitian entrants, Afghans and Iraqis with special immigrant visas, eligibility begins the month of arrival.
 - ii. For asylees, eligibility begins the month in which asylum is granted.
 - iii. For victims of human trafficking, eligibility begins the month the certification letter is issued

F. Period of Coverage

- 1. Once a refugee has been determined eligible for RMA, any earnings from employment will not impact eligibility for medical assistance, which will continue to the end of the eight-month eligibility period.
- 2. If a refugee is entitled to receive Medicaid, then during the first eight months following arrival into the U.S. becomes ineligible because of employment earnings, the individual is directly transferred to RMA for the remainder of the eight-month eligibility period. No further screening is done to determine financial need.

3. If a refugee receiving RMA enrolls in an employer sponsored health insurance program, then the employer-sponsored insurance becomes the primary coverage and RMA becomes the secondary coverage. RMA may pick up costs that the employer-sponsored insurance will not pay.

G. Case Establishment Process

1. RMA cases are entered in into VAMIS (or ADAPT) and are coded with Aide Category 78.
2. There is an electronic communication between VAMIS/ADAPT and MMIS. MMIS automatically issues a Medicaid card to the recipient.
3. The eligibility worker makes a hand-written notation on the Notice of Action that the client was determined eligible for RMA and the date the eligibility period ends.

H. Case Transfers

RMA case transfers are handled the same as Medicaid case transfers. A reapplication is not required. The receiving agency conducts a desk review to verify that there have been no changes in the case that would affect continued receipt of RMA.

I. Notices and Appeals

- a. Notification of Approval or Denial
 - a. The same rules regarding timeliness of application processing, notice of application determination, and notice of termination that apply to Medicaid cases, also apply to RMA cases.
 - b. If the individual is determined ineligible for RMA, the notice must include an explanation of the reason for the ineligibility, along with a statement about the refugee's right to appeal the decision.
- b. Appeals
 - a. Refugees who have applied for or are receiving RMA have a right to appeal:
 - i. A denial of assistance.
 - ii. No notice of application determination within 30 days of application.
 - iii. A notice of a termination in benefits due to employment income.

- b. The same Medicaid appeal rules regarding timeframes and notices apply to an appeal of RMA application, with the following exceptions
- c. For appeal of RMA termination due to the expiration of the eight month time limit, the appeal is to go forward; however, RMA is terminated pending the decision of the hearing officer regarding whether the eight month time period was calculated correctly.
- d. While an appeal is pending, in no case will RMA services continue after the eight month eligibility period.
- e. For appeals of terminations that are unrelated to the eight month time period, RMA services are to continue pending the decision of the hearing officer. If the hearing office finds in favor of the agency, RMA services provided during the appeal period will be recovered following the Medicaid payment recovery guidance.
- f. The hearing officer's decision may be appealed to the Administrative Review Panel of the Appeals & Fair Hearings Unit. A decision on the case will be made in writing within 60 days of the date that the refugee requests a hearing.
- g. The refugee should be notified that free legal advice can be obtained through the local legal aid office.